

Issue Twelve / August 2002

Gamefreaks

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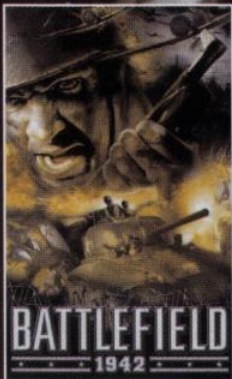
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DRAKAN: THE ANCIENT GATES

V-RALLY 3

GIVE 'EM HELL BOYS!



In Battlefield 1942, you will experience the heat of battle as you heroically storm the beaches of Normandy, drive a tank across the deserts of northern Africa, pilot a fighter plane during the Battle of Midway, command a battleship at Guadalcanal, or parachute over Market Garden. It is the only first-person, team-based action game that places you in the midst of a raging WWII battle with 35 "machines of war" for you to control. You'll arm yourself with the sidearm of your choice and get behind the wheel of a variety of vehicles, ships and aircraft to fight the war on land, sea, and air during some of the most famous and pivotal battles of the Second World War.



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thank you

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regulars

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read me

It's been a memorable winter for multiplayer gamers - Dungeon Siege and Neverwinter Nights can satisfying any RPG needs and WarCraft III is emerging as one of the top real time strategy titles around.

On the cover this month is Battlefield 1942 from EA. This extraordinary new WWII shooter looks every bit as good as they said it was after E3. Check out our full review on page 8.

Gran Turismo 3 has been around for just on a year and no other PS2 racer has got anywhere near it - GT Concept 2002 Tokyo-Geneva is a new, tweaked version of GT, complete with new cars and simplified options, for the driver who just wants to race. We've got copies of this to giveaway (plus a Force Feedback Logitech wheel) - check in the back for details.

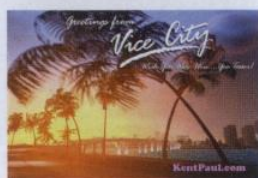
V8 Supercars Race Driver is a brilliant new racer from Codemasters, it's released at the end of the month but you can read up on it on page 11.

Other PS2 reviews include soaring motocross bikes in Freestyle from EA Big and even higher flying dragons in the new 3D adventure Drakan: The Ancient Gates.

On the PC, we take a look at the latest add-on for Microsoft's charming Zoo Tycoon, on the GameCube we burn rubber in Burnout, and exchange blows with NHL Hitz 2002 and we round the reviews off with V-Rally 3 on the Game Boy Advance.

This is our anniversary issue so I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all everyone who has supported us during our first year.

We will be introducing a few new features over the coming issues and keep and eye out next month for some welcome news regarding the Xbox.



HOT IN THE CITY TONIGHT

Miami Vice with a Rockstar twist

Grand Theft Auto 3 has swept all before it in the last year, catapulting RockStar Games and Take 2 Interactive to the top of every PS2 sales chart the world over.

The game has sold around six million copies worldwide including 20,000 in New Zealand - a stunning achievement considering it's R-rating and our limited market.

Now we're hearing reports of a new Grand Theft Auto title, even bigger and with more bedlam than the last time.

Set during the 1980s, the location is Vice City and the focus is on big money, big hair and big crime.

Sam Houser, executive producer of the Grand Theft Auto franchise and president of Rockstar Games, comments: "The work currently being done by our development and production teams in Edinburgh and New York is going to surpass the efforts of last year, as we set our sights on making an even more revolutionary gaming experience."

Kentpaul.com is a mock 80s website authored by the character of the same name. This homepage is an elaborate preview that sets the tone for the game - there are even quotes from prominent citizens of Vice City, the fictional setting from where the title of the new game comes.

The scope of gameplay is reported to be even bigger and more sophisticated, with enhanced cinematic graphics and sound.

Grand Theft Auto: Vice City is scheduled to reach our stores October 25.

EA GAMER OF THE YEAR FOUND

King of the sports gaming crowned in Queenstown



Jerry Teo, an 18-year-old Canterbury science degree student, beat six other gamers - including the defending champion, Wellington's Wayne Wallace - at the Electronic Arts Sports Gamer of the Year 2002 Championship.

Not only did he take the title, trophy and a prize pack valued at \$10,000 home to Riccarton, he was the youngest participant to do so since the comp began.

The competition began in May with a month of qualifying followed by regional playoffs. For the finals, the players competed for five gruelling hours at the Rattlesnake Bar in three EA Sports games: FIFA Football 2002, SSX Tricky and F1 2001.

"I can't believe it. This is amazing!" said Teo when presented with the trophy. "I'm really stoked about the awesome prize pack." Not surprising: the package includes the latest Sony home entertainment system, a PlayStation2 console and loads of EA Sports titles and merchandise.

"It was an intense and very exciting night for the contenders," says Mike Wynands, general manager of EA New Zealand. "All the players demonstrated a high level of proficiency across the three titles. However, Jerry displayed the additional aptitude needed for a well deserved win."

This was the third year and the competition has grown significantly since it was launched. EA hopes that it will expand in the next few years to become a global event. EA offices in 75 countries are talking about creating a competition to determine the greatest EA Sports gamer on the planet.



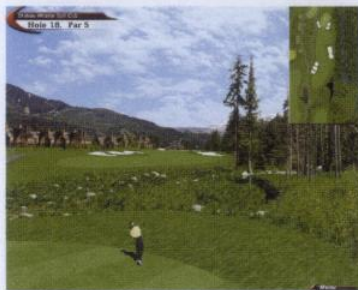
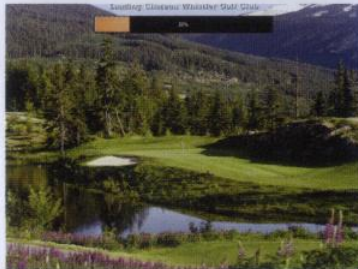
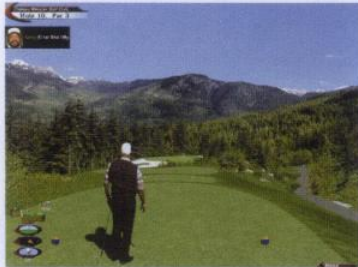
Local EA boss Mike Wynands (above) congratulates new champ Jerry Teo (above left) after his well deserved victory in Queenstown.

At 18-years-old, Jerry is the youngest gamer ever to win EA's prestigious tournament.



ONLINE GOLFERS WIN BIG DOLLARS

Now you don't have to even leave your house to make the green



Peter Jackson delivered an instant classic and now you can take it home.

On the DVD version, there is a disc full of bonus features including three full length documentaries, cast interviews, featurettes as well as a 10-minute preview of The Two Towers

In the 80s it was tennis. In the 90s it was squash or racquetball. Now the game to play with the boss is golf. New courses are being built everyday, so it seems only natural to merge golf with another all-consuming pastime - the internet. Who better than Microsoft's Game Studio to do it?

The Virtual Golf Association (VGA) Tour was created three years ago. Online golfers compete using Links Championship Edition, the latest in the popular series. As with the lifesize tournaments, there are courses, competitions, prizes and even sponsors, all located at linkstour.zone.com - host to more than 34,000 PC golfers from 10 countries.

The first tournament of this year's championship began on July 22. There will be three majors and a semi final capped off by the big event where the top four competitors square off in match play to declare the best. The 2001 VGA Tour had 22,000 participants with Paul Willey emerging victorious for the second year in a row, taking away over \$US150,000.

In honour of Links 2003's release in September, the ante has been raised to an unprecedented level. Microsoft will be giving the winner of the championship the opportunity to go for a cool \$US1 million by testing their genuine golf skills - trying to sink a 60ft (or 20m) putt on an actual course.

Missing does not mean the world's best virtual golfer will leave empty-handed. There is still a \$US50,000 payoff for being the world's greatest on screen.



Paul Willey walked away with the big money. We don't know about the rest of you but we're definitely going to start brushing up on our skills



THE LONG-EXPECTED DVD

One ring to rule them all (and 2 DVDs)

Peter Jackson's Academy award winning The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship off the Ring was released on DVD and VHS this month.

The DVD comes with a second disc full with bonus materials.

Of course, there are the usual interviews, documentaries, featurettes and previews for the next film as well as a look at the extended version, with 30 minutes of extra footage, which is being packaged for release on DVD before the year is out.

Of particular interest to us here at Gamefreaks was the sneak peek at some of the work going into EA's upcoming game version of The Fellowship off the Ring, currently in the final stages of production.

Next month we'll be heading down to EA's offices to preview this and other titles so keep an eye out for that. EA's The Fellowship off the Ring is expected to reach game stores before Christmas.

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GAME BOY ADVANCE

HALO

PLATFORM:XBOX ■ PUBLISHER:MICROSOFT ■ RELEASE: Q4



It has won every accolade under the sun, including numerous "Game of the Year" awards. IGN called it "a complete experience that only made you wish it could go on forever".

It has sold well over a million copies worldwide and before too long Microsoft's famous combat title will be available in New Zealand.

As a member of an elite fighting squad, you're summoned to eliminate an extraterrestrial threat on an ancient alien world known as Halo.

There are a number of strange creatures that would genuinely prefer if you weren't around, so the action is intense from the get-go.

You'll have to fight in vehicles or on foot in various indoor and outdoor alien environments. These spectacular landscapes (especially in the outdoor levels) are the perfect showcase for the graphics capabilities of the Xbox.

Weapons are fantastic and as you progress you'll be able to add alien firepower to your arsenal. It's bound to come in handy because ultimately the future of the human race is in your hands. No pressure.

RESIDENT EVIL

PLATFORM:GAMECUBE ■ PUBLISHER:NINTENDO ■ RELEASE: Q4

The Resident Evil series is reborn. In this ultimate gaming remake developers Capcom have gone all-out to thrill and terrify. It's odd that such a game should turn up on Nintendo's GameCube, a system frequently associated with younger gamers: perhaps they are looking to attract more mature gamers.

We were lucky enough to get a sneak preview of the game via an NTSC Cube and it's jaw-droppingly good-looking.

As a seasoned veteran of the series, it's refreshing to see the original tale recreated in such details. It is set in the mysterious mansion outside Raccoon City and, while everything has a slightly familiar air, on closer inspection there are new areas to explore.

Apart from the visuals, the sound has improved and so has the voice acting - Barry no longer sounds as wooden as the banister that lines the stairwell.

But the stars of the show are the hideous creatures that have mutated as a result of the dreaded T-Virus and there are more zombies than you can shake a loaded sawnoff at.



TEKKEN 4

PLATFORM:PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: SCEI ■ RELEASE: SEPTEMBER



Like many of you, we were beginning to think the 3D fighting genre was as dead as Dillinger. But it has been a good period for fans of coin-op style fighting games. Sega's Virtua Fighter 4 impressed with its speed and free-and-easy gameplay, but now the King of the Iron Fist Tournament is back - and better than ever.

Tekken 4 is the latest title in the long-running franchise, and the second to port from the arcade to the PS2.

Like preceding Tekken titles this has a plot. Heihatchi has organised another fighting tournament to lure various enemies out from hiding, which means you will eventually have to fight the old man.

There is a good mix of new and old characters. Initially there are 10 playable with a further nine to unlock. Watch out for Steve, a boxer from the UK, who doesn't do any kicks at all, and the charming Christie, who fights exactly like Eddy from Tekken 3.



NEED FOR SPEED HOT PURSUIT 2

PLATFORM:PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER:EA GAMES ■ RELEASE: SEPTEMBER

Need For Speed fans will already know what to expect from this new milestone in the series. The superb "Hot Pursuit" mode returns and once again the player can be the chaser or the chased.

The game boasts a huge and impressive list of super cars and a whopping 60 events split between Hot Pursuit and Championship mode. There is also a Quick Race mode that randomly selects cars and track. Whichever mode you choose, the awards are the same - new cars, new paint jobs, and previously unavailable courses.

Classic NFS licences such as Ferrari, Porsche, and Lamborghini all make a welcome return. Borrowing slightly from a Gran Turismo influence, players can now upgrade favourite vehicles for greater performance.

Hot Pursuit has a new and ultra-aggressive AI that will have you running for your life. Spiked strips, sideswiping cop cars and even choppers are out to stop you.

Put your foot down: this promises to be one of the most exciting racers we'll see this year.



MAFIA

PLATFORM:PC ■ PUBLISHER:TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE ■ RELEASE: Q4

The year is 1930 - the era of big bands, zoot suits and gangsters. In this new third-person 3D action game you must rise through the ranks of the Mafia from goon to made man.

There are 20 single-player missions with a number of side jobs where you will be able to drive up to 60 different vehicles, including the Model T, roadsters and delivery trucks, each with their own handling characteristics.

The numerous multi-player options support games via LAN or over the internet. There are seven multiplayer modes, such as Deathmatch and Capture the Flag.

The game is huge, covering 12 square miles of a 1930s American city recreated in painstaking detail, complete with traffic, landmarks and surrounding landscapes.

The high life awaits those who do as Don Salieri wishes. Expect to perform many criminal acts, from strongarming to hits and shootouts and certain unsavoury tasks that "The Family" needs done.

Look out for Mafia in the coming months ... or go sleep with the fishes.



THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

PLATFORM:GAME BOY ADVANCE ■ PUBLISHER:NINTENDO ■ RELEASE: Q4



Nintendo has announced that Zelda is headed for the Game Boy Advance. Purists needn't worry: it's looking picture-perfect.

Like Super Mario World 2, the game is faithful as the GBA version is basically a direct port from the Super NES original.

While your quest takes you to the furthest reaches of Hyrule and into the Dark World, the best news is the unveiling of a new four-player option.

This new multiplayer mode sees you and your colleagues searching dungeons for valuable rupees. Rather than killing each other, you must use teamwork to overcome various traps and puzzles. You can share resources to help each other during your treacherous journey. If killing still sounds good, don't worry - you can always bump off a team-mate and steal his gear.

As a 10-year-old 2D RPG adventure, The Legend of Zelda stands up surprisingly well. Handheld fans have another classic reborn on the GBA - tentatively scheduled the release before Christmas.



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BATTLEFIELD 1942

PLATFORM: PC ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: DIGITAL ILLUSIONS ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ RELEASE: SEPTEMBER



In order to be victorious you have to make good use of all the weapons and resources, combining tanks and dive-bombers, submarines and carriers, and machine gun nests with artillery

Nearly 60 summers have passed since the Anzacs, Britain, Russia and the rest of Europe were at war with Germany. But it appears that the conflicts of last century are still fresh in the memories of top game developers around the world.

In recent times we've seen Operation Flashpoint, Return to Castle Wolfenstein, EA's Medal of Honor: Allied Assault and World War II Online, to name just a few.

Battlefield 1942 is essentially a first-person shooter, very much in the mould of MOH Allied Assault or Counter Strike, but there's more. As we saw in Operation Flashpoint, this game lets you borrow any vehicles you find.

Players can roll across the deserts of North Africa in a Panzer tank, fly Zeros against American warships at the Battle of Midway or storm the beaches at Normandy. The number of options in this game is amazing.

The online maps will hold up to 64 players (32 per side) which isn't quite massively multi-player but that is a lot of troops on the ground, each with their own agenda. In Battlefield 1942, war is not hell, it's just a hell of a lot of fun

You can choose to play as an American, German, British, Russian, or Japanese soldier (sorry, not our blokes). You then select from one of five classes, each with a distinct kit. The assault troop's kit, for example, comes with a machinegun. The anti-tank kit includes a bazooka and the scouts', medics' and engineers' kits hold similarly lethal goodies. Once you kill an enemy soldier, his equipment can be picked up so you can grab handy items from another class.

Your first and easiest option while playing is to simply attack on foot or find something to drive around in. In single player, the battles are not scripted so when you spawn into a new map, anything can happen. The most obvious benefit there is that things are never the same so you can

live to fight another day. And another. And another...

The game is played out on 16 enormous maps on four main fronts: Pacific (Midway, Iwo Jima, Wake and Guadalcanal), North Africa (Tobruk, El Alamein, Battleaxe and Gazala), Eastern Front (Berlin, Karkov, Stalingrad and Kursk) and Europe (Omaha Beach, Bocage, Market Garden and the Battle of the Bulge).

The maps are huge, so you're going to want some wheels to get around. Obviously you're much more vulnerable when on foot so whenever possible you should commandeer a jeep or a tank or one of the 35 vehicles in this game. If you're playing multi-player, your team-mates can ride along with you and man the various weapons.

For example, the sprawling desert of Tobruk is only lightly



Battlefield 1942 includes a huge variety of vehicles from all five sides, including jeeps, the Kubelwagen, the Sherman, T34, and PzKw IV tanks, the King George V Class and Yamato Class battleships, a Gato Class Sub, the P-51 Mustang, BF-109, B-17 Flying Fortress, and JU 87 Stuka, to name just a few. All are yours to drive (or pilot). Everything you could ever want in a WWII game is here

littered with tanks and jeeps. Grab what you can because you wouldn't want to be stuck on foot - you're likely to be overrun by a wall of advancing tanks. In the Pacific, it's a lot easier to find vehicles - in fact, it's a smorgasbord of tanks, planes and naval vessels, all of which you can use.

Each vehicle features a strikingly accurate cockpit view and controlling them is as simple as pressing forward arrow to accelerate, left and right to steer and clicking the right mouse button to fire the weapons.

Flying a plane is a little more difficult to master. But Battlefield 1942 is certainly no flight simulator. Would-be flying aces can pull off tricks like flying upside down or dogfighting but the controls have been simplified in a concerted effort to keep things fun and playable.

It's a great feeling to steal a jeep, drive to an airfield, leap into a Spitfire and roar off into the skies to engage the Luftwaffe just because you can.

We now know why Battlefield 1942 has appeared on every "Best of E3" list we've seen. It's the most ambitious online WWII title ever so if you're into fun, action, warfare, multiplayer or all of the above, we strongly urge you check this one out.





GRAN TURISMO CONCEPT 2002 TOKYO - GENEVA

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: SCEI ■ DEVELOPER: SQUARESOFT ■ PRICE: \$79.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



The stunning beauty of Gran Turismo in full flight cannot be denied but this newest instalment is not a sequel to GT3 - it's a repackaged, redesigned version of Polyphony Digital's record breaking racer. The sleek new concept cars, informal gameplay and reduced price should attract a whole new audience to the wonderful world of GT



The original Gran Turismo left everyone gasping at its realism. The sequel was even better featuring 651 cars. Gran Turismo 3 was released a year ago and its still one of the best PS2 titles around.

But racing games can often be quite serious, even a little tedious. Particularly if you have to wade through a million preferences before you get to see a track. A large number of gamers are quite happy to skip instructions, options, intros - you name it, they don't want to see it.

With these people in mind, GT Concept 2002 Tokyo-Geneva is a streamlined version of GT3.

The most obvious difference is that there is no simulation

mode (Gran Turismo Mode), so that means no buying or selling or even the opportunity to add that Stage 4 turbo or those super slick tyres you have wanted.

Due to advanced modeling techniques the cars actually look better. But apart from the general tidy of the graphics and the UI the most notable new features are the terrific new street course, Tokyo R246 and a six player option care of the I-Link cable.

Basically the game is full arcade version which contains the latest concept cars - there is a selection of 95 to choose from. The Cars range from a Dual Note which is dual powered to a VW W12.

The cars themselves are

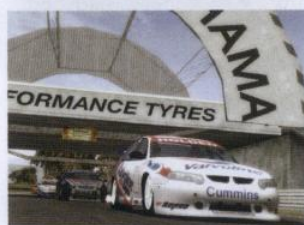
finely tuned, but you have the ability to change a few settings before a race like suspension, ride height and so on. License tests are back but this time, by winning Gold, Silver or Bronze reveals a new car with a nice 5% added to the completion of the game.

Although there are two difficulty modes the game is quite easy. Hardened GT gamers will be able to complete it in less than ten hours There are only 5 tracks to play on which can be played in reverse.

The Gran Turismo series is the leading racing simulation around and now Polyphony Digital has created another superbly slick racer that even casual gamers can enjoy, at reduced price.

V8 SUPERCARS RACE DRIVER

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: OZISOFT ■ DEVELOPER: CODEMASTERS ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: AUGUST 29



Codemasters have always been innovators, especially with games like the Colin McRae titles, Shane Warne Cricket and the acclaimed TOCA Touring Car series.

This newest game in the TOCA franchise is Codemasters' best effort to date. They've put a great deal of thought into how they were going to make this PS2 racing title different.

What they've created is a game that features all the thrill and speed of a TOCA title with an evolving character and storyline similar to what you'd find in an RPG.

Ryan McKane is a young rookie driver, with a lot to live up to. During the opening FMV, we flash back fifteen years to when Ryan, then just a boy, witnesses the gruesome crash and fiery death of his father, a world renowned driver.

This is pretty intense stuff for a driving game but it sets up the story very nicely as well as providing that much needed "hey-you-killed-my-father" motivation when you're on the track.

By creating a character players can relate to, the game lets you experience all the highs and lows of being a rookie driver in a tough V8 competition.

Career Mode lets you guide and develop your character, as



Graphically V8 Supercars Race Driver is streets ahead of previous efforts from Codemasters – even with several cars on the track, the frame-rate rips along. This latest evolution of the TOCA series is up with the very best of the PS2 driving games

he grows in stature, from rank newbie to seasoned expert with a top team.

The aggressive AI drivers won't cut you any slack – often they'll put you into a wall if that can.

Avoiding them as you zoom around one of the 80 odd tracks is an exhilarating challenge. You can definitely damage these cars – bumpers and panels fall off, windows shatter. All of which will affect your car's performance so keep your lines fair and your nose clean.

Once you start winning a few races, new managers

attempt to poach you for rival teams, offering better contracts, better cars, better spots and tons of advice.

This is one of the best racing games we've seen this year – fast, original, playable and genuinely easy on the eye. It's also being released for the Xbox and we can't wait to see how this looks on Microsoft's new console.

Sony were so impressed by V8 Supercars Race Driver that they are reported to be looking into possibly packaging the game with their high flying console.





DRAKAN THE ANCIENT GATES

PLATFORM:PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER:SCEI ■ DEVELOPER:SURREAL SOFTWARE ■ PRICE: \$119.00 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



Rynn (seen here in her fetching armour) handles up to 50 different weapons in this game including crossbows, swords and even magic spells but clocking up frequent flyer miles on the back of her pet dragon remains the game's main highlight

The ancient Order of the Flame held strong for centuries. Then it was destroyed by the traitorous Dark Union, sending the world into chaos and darkness. The Dragons withdrew to await the end of the fallen age. Now that all seems lost, there remains one last hope.

This is about where our leading lady in this fairytale comes in. Rynn is a medieval Lara Croft with similar endowments but a dragon rather than a butler.

Drakan: The Ancients' Gates is a third-person action adventure. The gameplay is divided into two main parts - Rynn, on foot, which both looks and plays a little like Tomb Raider - and flying around on the back of the dragon Arokh. The flying sequences are great and you can hop on and off at any time to fly off on some new quest.

Just like the original, you can purchase weapons, armour, health and potions. Weapons are subject to wear and tear but can be repaired at the blacksmith.

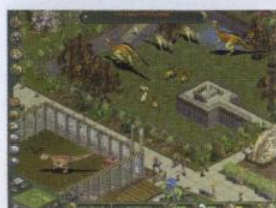
Rynn's entire family was killed, most recently her young brother. Her whole village was destroyed, so she never lacks motivation for a fight. She can also cast spells. If you hold down the circle button, she will hold up her left hand and it will begin to glow. By pressing certain directional buttons on the D-pad, Rynn will wave her hand in a series of gestures that, if done correctly, will lead to a cool spell.

There is plenty of gameplay packed into the 15 levels, all set in fairly attractive 3D environments - everything from scary swamps to mystical mountains.



ZOO TYCOON DINOSAUR DIGS

PLATFORM:PC ■ PUBLISHER:MICROSOFT ■ DEVELOPER:BLUE FANG GAMES ■ PRICE: \$49.00 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



Ever wanted your own Jurassic Park? Microsoft's new expansion pack for Zoo Tycoon has gone prehistoric.

The goal is to build, maintain and expand an animal park but unlike the previous title where you're dealing with elephants, lions and traditional zoo animals, you are now caring for prehistoric dinosaurs.

You first purchase the dinosaurs as eggs that must then be taken care of by a scientist. Scientists look after the dinosaurs, essentially replacing the zoo keepers, they will offer advice on what kind of enclosure each dinosaur prefers but these can only be built once the eggs have been hatched.

There are new habitat materials, building materials and buildings, including volcanoes, geysers and tar pits. There are also 20 new prehistoric creatures including the sabre toothed tiger and the gigantic woolly mammoth. As in the original game you can learn about each of the dinosaurs in an information screen. It's always fun to watch as the Dinosaur Recovery Team attempt to recapture escaped dinosaurs. A helicopter waits at a helipad and then when a dinosaur escapes it soars off, swoops down and tranquillises the beast.

Dinosaur Digs has six new scenarios that range from creating an Ice Park to caring for a baby T.Rex. Once these are complete the game adds more maps to use in Freeform mode. The improved building management tool now allows you to compare all the buildings to see their average profits.

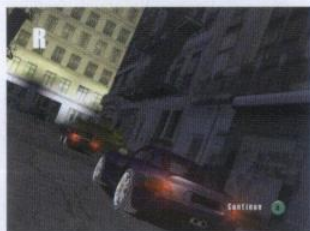
All things considered, this is an admirable addition to the Zoo series so if playing babysitter to our prehistoric ancestors' sounds like your dream job, Dinosaur Digs awaits.



Building costly electrical fences is a must to keep these huge dinosaurs safely contained. But take some care when designing your park - we found out the hard way that apart from being eaten, guests can actually be electrified if walkways are placed too close to the fence

BURNOUT

PLATFORM: GAMECUBE ■ PUBLISHER: NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER: ACCLAIM ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



Having already enjoyed acclaim on the PS2, Burnout is with a doubt the best racer currently available on the GameCube - weaving through the dense traffic at ridiculous speeds is a treat

The concept here is simple: speed. Choose a vehicle from one of numerous classes (saloons, pickups, muscle cars etc) and race three opponents through traffic on a street course. The majority allow the racer to "floor it" and drive at the very limits of control.

There are 16 courses set in the US and Europe, all with their own challenges and obstacles. Hey, there are more than 300 vehicles to leave your no-claims bonus on. The other traffic is intelligent, with three different types of driver behaviour.

Realistic car crashes are highlighted by multi-camera instant replays, and the vibration-capable controllers let the players feel every turn and bump.

High resolution, including HDTV and Progressive Scan support, provide crisp, clear visuals and Dolby surround-sound technology (including 5.1 channel audio on the Xbox) adds to the excitement and realism of gameplay. If that's not enough for you, check out the light's reflection on cars and tracks. Also exclusive to the Xbox is bump-mapping, which enhances the detail of the road surfaces. Smoother textures and images are created by all new tri-linear filtering.

PlayStation2 owners are already familiar with this title from UK-based developers Criterion. They provided PS2 users with a good, seriously fast racing game that's ideal for speed junkies. This is a direct port for the GameCube adding further fuel to the fire of belief that it's getting by on PS2 leftovers. Nonetheless, Burnout has translated extremely well and is another excellent multi-player title.



FREEKSTYLE

PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 2 ■ PUBLISHER: EA GAMES ■ DEVELOPER: EA BIG ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



Forget about snowboarding and skidoos: Freestyle places you on a powerful motocross bike.

Sticking to that winning formula, Freestyle reminded us a lot of SSX Tricky and to a lesser extent, Sled Storm. All three games were developed by EA's extreme sports development arm EA Big.

The biggest difference between Freestyle and SSX is the absence of any grinding, which featured so prominently in Tricky.

This is more than made up for with a series of huge jumps that'll see your biker flying through the air like a stuntman with a death wish.

There are several modes, including Career mode which lets you build up characters from scratch - players unlock tracks and hidden bonuses by completing all the Freestyle races before they graduate to the more insane Freestyle events.

Like all the games we've seen so far from EA Big, Freestyle has little to do with reality. It features physics that only Superman could relate to, but the reason we play games is to have fun and Freestyle doesn't fall short there.

With the usual array of quirky characters, well-designed tracks, bone-jarring spills and an unrelenting focus on action, EA Big's Freestyle offers Tricky fans a genuine alternative as they wait for the next instalment.



Just as in SSX and Tricky, players can earn serious boost points by performing insane tricks around each course

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NHL HITZ 2002

PLATFORM:GAMECUBE ■ PUBLISHER:NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER: BLACK BOX GAMES ■ PRICE: \$129.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



With its speed and brutal gameplay, NHL Hitz is up there with *Cel Damage* and *Super Smash Bros Melee* as one of the best multiplayer games on the Cube

He shoots, he scores! Kiwis might barely know the phrase but it's familiar to followers of the sport where grown men skate around a large ice rink carrying sticks and chasing a round piece of rubber called a puck trying to put it into a goal significantly smaller than the one in football. This is a full-contact sport with more than the occasional fist-fight and referees who take their sweet time breaking them up.

With never a dull moment, a spectacle of such velocity and intensity seems the perfect fit for a video game and NHL Hitz 2002 from Midway capitalises on the main aspects. The game is even more unruly than the real thing; aided by a unique three-on-three format it is

also easier. The gameplay is demanding but they've made the controls simple.

This game is not a simulator. The closest thing to actual ice hockey is the concept and the use of National Hockey League teams and intact, up-to-date player rosters. There are bonecrunching hits and the tempo is lightning quick. It is difficult to score goals as the keeps are very fast and the nets look like they were shrunk in the wash.

We really enjoyed the speed and brutality of this title. We can best sum that up by explaining that after a fight breaks out, it's the guy who gets knocked on his arse who is sent off.

V-RALLY 3

PLATFORM:GAME BOY ADVANCE ■ PUBLISHER:NINTENDO ■ DEVELOPER: ATARI ■ PRICE: \$99.95 ■ RELEASE: OUT NOW



It's one thing to see old Super NES games like *Super Mario World* being ported to the Game Boy Advance. That system is at least 10 years old and the visuals are generally not too taxing on the 32-bit graphics capabilities of Nintendo's handheld.

Now we're starting to see PlayStation titles making the switch. A few months ago, *Tekken Advance* provided a solid 2D fighting game and now *V-Rally 3* has turned up, looking great.

V-Rally began on the PlayStation when there were few rally titles around: *Sega Rally* on the Saturn was about it. So it's safe to assume that *V-Rally* started the Kiwi love affair with off-road racing.

At the beginning, you're offered contracts from Renault, Citroen and Volkswagen. These compete in the easier 1.6L

rally league. Perform well and you will get offers from other manufacturers like Subaru and Ford in the harder, faster 2.0L league.

The rallies take place all over the world: France, Sweden, Great Britain, Kenya, Portugal, Germany and Finland. Sadly there is no New Zealand stage (even though we host the longest running world championship rally).

The handling is nice and accurate, providing that all-important feel of driving just on the limits of control. The scenery looks good but you'll be too busy sliding sideways around a hairpin to notice.

This new GBA version is an ambitious project. Once you get over the fact that you're seeing polygons on such a tiny screen - at a fairly decent frame rate - you begin to realise just what an amazing achievement.



WARCRAFT III

PC ■ TOTAL INTERACTIVE

Blizzard's long expected RTS follow up is now here and the results are not far short of spectacular.

Apart from the vastly improved 3D graphics engine, *WarCraft III* features four races - Humans, Orcs, The Undead and the Night Elves -- tons of maps, heroes, epic campaigns, endless online options and the list goes on and on.

Over the coming months, *WarCraft III* will likely overtake *StarCraft* as the most popular (and the most played) online RTS around.



SIMPSON'S ROAD RAGE

GAMECUBE ■ EA

Crazy Taxi has evolved from the arcades on to numerous next-generation consoles but its influence has apparently gone even further. *Simpson's Road Rage* is a unashamed rip off, only the taxi is now being driven by Homer, Bart, Chief Wigham and co and instead of the Levis shop or KFC, your destinations are places like Moe's Bar, Mr Burn's Mansion or downtown Springfield.

With easy-as-pie controls and continual wisecracks, this is textbook perfect for younger Cube fans. Vote Quimby!



PRISONER OF WAR

PLAYSTATION 2 ■ OZISOFT

If you've enjoyed films like *The Great Escape* or if you're old enough to remember the stark British TV drama *Colditz*, *POW* could be for you.

The diverse gameplay has you gathering supplies and intelligence to escape various camps - you must pick locks, steal tools and even impersonate a Nazi.

But this is no *Hogan's Heroes*, the threat of death at the hands of a trigger-happy guard is constant. Wie wundervoll.

WIN...

GT CONCEPT & DRIVING FORCE

Sony has generously provided 3 copies of GT Concept 2002 Tokyo-Geneva and the first name we draw will enjoy the ultimate arcade experience at home with a Logitech Driving Force wheel. Answer the following to be in the draw to win.



"In the world of PS2 racing, what does GT usually stand for?"

- a) "Gin and Tonic"
- b) "Gran Turismo"
- c) "Gravy Train"

PLATINUM GAME BOY ADVANCE

Ben from Nintendo has given us a limited edition Platinum Game Boy Advance to giveaway to one of our lucky readers. Answer the following question to go into the draw to win.



"Name the giant Japanese company behind the Game Boy Advance"

- a) "Sony"
- b) "Sega"
- c) "Nintendo"

BATTLEFIELD 1942

We have 2 copies of this amazing new EA shooter to giveaway. Answer the question below and you will go in the draw to win.

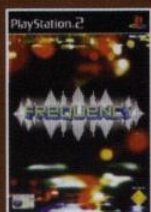


"Who wasn't a member of the Axis?"

- a) "Italy" b) "Germany" c) "Australia"

FREQUENCY FOR PS2

We reviewed Frequency a few issues back and now Sony has kindly given us 5 copies to giveaway. Respect! Answer the following to be in to win.



"Name the band featuring a blonde leader singer with a song in this new title?"

- a) "No Doubt"
- b) "Twisted Sister"
- c) "Black Sabbath"

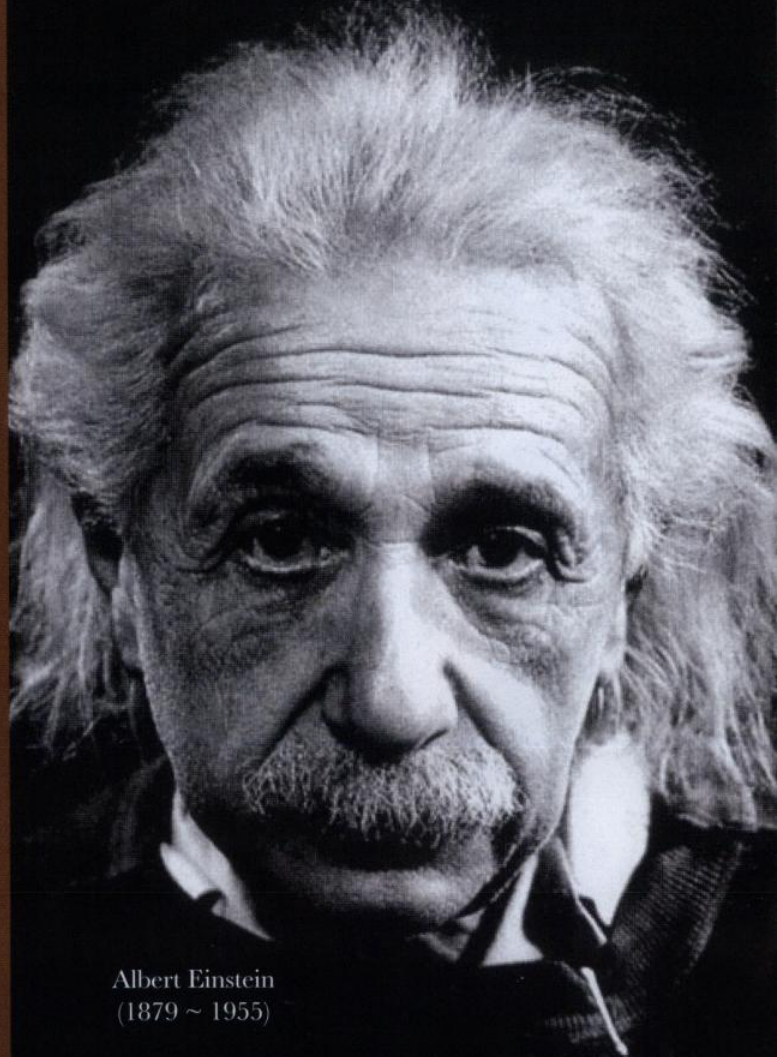
HOW TO ENTER

Be sure to write your name, phone number and contact details on the back of the envelope, list the prize you're after and of course, you will need to include the correct answer. All correct entries immediately go into the draw to win. Send to:

Gamefreaks Competition
PO Box 68211
Newton
Auckland

All winners for this month's competitions will be notified before September 5, 2002

stumped?



Albert Einstein
(1879 ~ 1955)

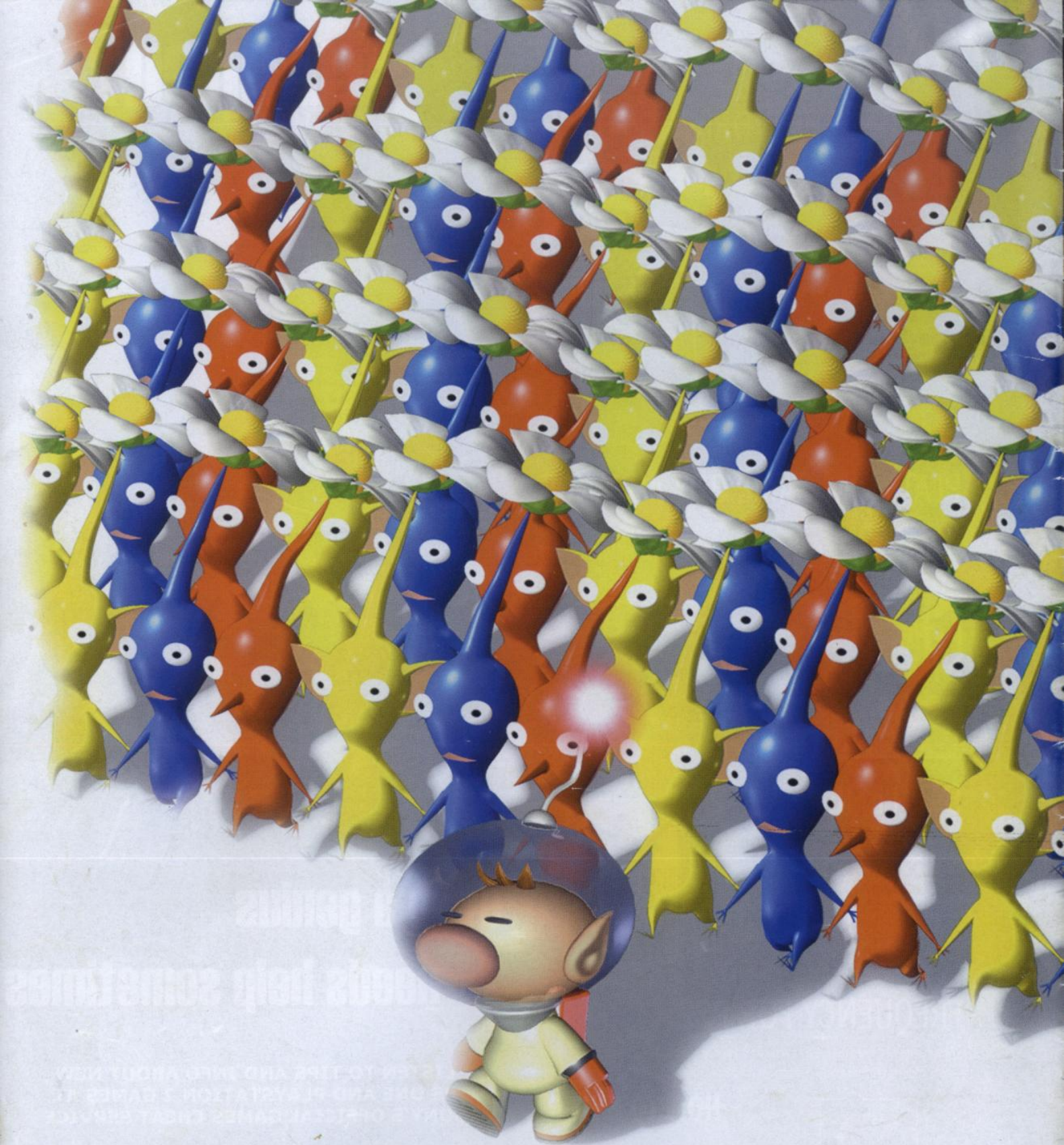
even a genius needs help sometimes

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